

Message Text

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17 11
ACTION PM-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 EB-11 COME-00 MC-02 L-03 NSC-10

SPC-03 SAM-01 SS-20 RSC-01 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00

OMB-01 TRSE-00 DRC-01 SAJ-01 ACDA-19 /116 W
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R 040610Z FEB 74
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECDEF WASHDC
SECSTATE WASHDC 0145
INFO AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 01774

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, MILI, GW
SUBJECT: REPLACEMENT AIRCRAFT FOR F-104; FRG TOW
PURCHASE

1. I HAVE BEEN FOLLOWING THE TRAFFIC ON IDEAS SUGGESTED
AND ACTIONS PROPOSED TO ENSURE THAT A US REPLACEMENT
FOR THE F-104 IS SELECTED BY CERTAIN EUROPEAN NATIONS.
WE AND THE GERMANS IN BONN ARE WELL AWARE OF THE
ADVANTAGE WHICH WOULD FLOW TO EUROPE FROM THE
PURCHASE OF A US AIRCRAFT FROM PRACTICALLY ANY POINT OF
VIEW, INCLUDING ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY, WEAPONS STANDARDI-
ZATION AND ECONOMICS. THE FRG, OF COURSE, IS NOT IN
THE MARKET NOW FOR A REPLACEMENT, SINCE IT HAS ALREADY
PURCHASED 175 F-4'S AND ITS MRCA PROGRAM IS MAKING
REASONABLE PROGRESS.

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2. WHEN I MET WITH DEFENSE MINISTER LEBER ON JANUARY

30, I RAISED THE F-104 REPLACEMENT ISSUE WITH A VIEW TO ELICITING HIS INTEREST IN THE MATTER. NOTING THAT THE FRG IS NOT WITHOUT INFLUENCE IN THE SCANDINAVIAN AND BENELUX CAPITALS, I POINTED OUT THAT THERE ARE BROAD EUROPEAN POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC INTERESTS CONNECTED WITH PURCHASING A US REPLACEMENT, PARTICULARLY BECAUSE THE EUROPEANS COULD USE THEIR PURCHASES FOR BURDENSARING PURPOSES IN THE COMING YEARS. IN ADDITION, THE US CANDIDATE WOULD BE THE PRODUCT OF MORE UP-TO-DATE AND SOPHISTICATED TECHNOLOGY. IN THE COURSE OF OUR DISCUSSION, LEBER AGREED IT MIGHT BE USEFUL FOR BONN TO INSTRUCT ITS APPROPRIATE EMBASSIES TO MAKE THESE POINTS. STATE SECRETARY MANN, WHO SAT IN THE DISCUSSION, ADDED THAT SOME DISCRETE INFLUENCE MIGHT PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE EUROPEANS' DECISION. MANN HAD BEEN BRIEFED ON THE PROBLEM A FEW DAYS EARLIER BY MG WAGSTAFF AT WHICH TIME HE AGREED TO DO WHAT HE COULD TO ASSIST IN THE MATTER.

3. I ALSO TOOK THE OCCASION TO REMIND LEBER OF OUR INTEREST IN GERMAN PURCHASES OF TOW MISSILES. AS IN MY PREVIOUS DISCUSSION WITH HIM ON THE MATTER, HE SAID HE WAS WELL-AWARE OF OUR INTEREST, BUT THAT HE HAD TO BEAR IN MIND POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS BECAUSE THE HOT SYSTEM IS A JOINT FRG-FRENCH DEVELOPMENT. THE FRG'S ANTI-TANK MISSILE PROCUREMENT PROBLEM IS FURTHER COMPLICATED BY THE BUNDESWEHR REORGANIZATION WHICH WILL GET UNDERWAY IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS. LEBER INDICATED THAT THE GERMANS ARE NOT CLEAR AS TO WHAT ANTI-TANK WEAPONS THEY WILL NEED TO EQUIP THEIR REORGANIZATION DIVISIONS. HOWEVER, I HAVE THE CLEAR IMPRESSION THE GERMANS WILL CONTINUE TO MAKE SUBSTANTIAL TOW PURCHASES, NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF THE TECHNICAL PROFICIENCY OF THE WEAPON BUT BECAUSE THEY NEED PROJECTS FOR INCLUSION UNDER OUR OFFSET ARRANGEMENTS.
HILLENBRAND

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY EQUIPMENT, AIRCRAFT SALES, MISSILES, DEBT REPAYMENTS, REORGANIZATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 FEB 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974BONN01774
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: BONN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740259/aaaaccyd.tel
Line Count: 97
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION PM
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 MAR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <27 MAR 2002 by martinml>; APPROVED <31 MAY 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REPLACEMENT AIRCRAFT FOR F-104; FRG TOW PURCHASE
TAGS: MASS, MILI, GE, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005